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2^d Part.
TWO ADDITIONAL
LETTERS

(BEING THE THIRD AND FOURTH)

TO HIS EXCELLENCY THE
COUNT DE WELDEREN,

ON THE PRESENT SITUATION OF AFFAIRS

BETWEEN

GREAT BRITAIN

AND THE

UNITED PROVINCES.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

By JOHN ANDREWS, LL.D.

Nulla venenato Litera mixta Joco.

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THE T. H. K. S.

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COUNT DE WELDEREN

2000年12月15日

ORIENTAL

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UNITED PROVINCE

WITH THE MUSEUM OF THE UNITED STATES



BY JOHN ANDREW, LTD.

4-12-1944

NO. 10

PRINTED FOR HER MAJESTY

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LETTER III.

SIR,

IN the first of the two letters which I took the liberty of writing to your Excellency, I endeavoured to set forth the general necessity of a good intelligence and union between the British and Dutch nations,—the benefits which have resulted from a sincere cultivation of it on both sides—the dangers that clearly threaten, and will infallibly attend a rupture between them—the consequences, truly tremendous, which all Europe will most certainly experience from the ambition and tyranny of the House of Bourbon, should it compass its long-desired object, the destruction of the balance of power among the European states.

I endeavoured, at the same time, to expose the absurdity and the iniquity of sacrificing realities to mere forms—of adhering to words in preference to obvious meaning—of turning treaties, intended for mutual advantage,

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into

into instruments of partial, and eventually of reciprocal, detriment.

In the second letter, I strove, by an investigation of historical circumstances, as well as by other reasons, to shew that the spirit of treaties militated clearly and decisively against the claims, so unfeelingly challenged by your Excellency's countrymen, to carry on a trade evidently calculated to accelerate the ruin of a people, with whom they are not only at peace, but connected by treaties that imply the strictest amity; a people upon whose preservation and welfare their own unquestionably depend.

I closed that letter with an examination of the various complaints urged by the enemies of this country, and tending to represent it as aiming at a tyrannical controul in maritime affairs. I hope my sentiments on that subject, will appear well-founded, as, I flatter myself, I have alledged nothing but what will have weight with those who are willing to listen to a fair and candid representation of facts.

In that number, the united voice of the British public most chearfully ranks your Excellency; by whom this appeal, on the unhappy differences arisen between Great Britain and Holland, will, I doubt not, be treated with impartiality and candour, and the sincerest

cerest endeavours exerted to terminate them to the mutual honour and benefit of both nations.

From this conviction of your Excellency's disposition, I shall attempt to strengthen the arguments contained in the preceding letters, by some additional ideas which have occurred on a further inspection of the subject in question.

You will readily conceive, the importance of it is of so serious a magnitude, that a thinking person, tolerably conversant in the history of Great Britain and Holland, and zealous for a continuation, or, to speak properly at this unfortunate crisis, for a speedy renewal of their union, will be at no loss to find, in the course of his reflections, a world of motives to urge, in favour of so desirable an issue.

It cannot be doubted, the sensible part of your Excellency's countrymen are as desirous to live on terms of concord and amity with Great Britain, as the English themselves.

The difficulties wherein we are involved, awaken all our care and anxiety; they should receive no addition. They are already so heavy, so enormous, that nothing but the magnani-

mity of a people habituated to great exertions, could face them without despondency.

In the midst of this dreadful storm, it becomes the duty of those at the helm, to appreciate, with the strictest exactness, the dangers surrouding us, and to employ their whole presence of mind in encountering those first, which, in the coolness of reasoning and discernment, they perceive to be the most alarming

Impelled by this necessary consideration, they have laboured to stave off the evil hour of altercation with their ancient friends and allies. No man knows better than your Excellency, with how much warmth and earnestness this country has pleaded her cause before the tribunal of Candour and Equity, in order to avert the unfriendly, the hostile, treatment she has so long and so undeservedly met with, from the people of Holland. No negotiations, no remonstrances, no intreaties, have been omitted, that were any ways consistent with the dignity and spirit of the British nation.

But the inauspicious star, which has lately shed such baneful influence on all the concerns of this realm, has not yet exhausted its malignancy. It was not sufficient that Great Britain should maintain a contest alone, and unsupported,

unsupported, against her revolted subjects in America, against the power of France, and the treasures of Spain; she was destined to undergo the further aggravation of combating the collateral efforts employed in favour of her declared enemies, by those whom, according to the long-established system of European politics, she was bound to consider as her warmest friends.

The truth is, that in the present case avarice has been the assistant of ambition. The House of Bourbon has, by the fascination of present profit, drawn into the vortex of its measures those, among her neighbours, who are most interested, and should, therefore, be most eager in opposing them.

It cannot be denied, that in the course of the manifold discussions, occasioned by this conduct of the States General, the English have invariably spoken the language of politicians, and have as invariably been answered in the language of mere merchants and traders.

The objections to the councils adopted by your Excellency's constituents, were constantly founded on the manifold evils they would infallibly produce, while, on the other hand, the motives adduced for embracing them,

them, were repeatedly those of present convenience and profit.

In the midst of this illiberal treatment of the British nation, nothing is more worthy of remark, than the patient investigation of it by so spirited a people, during so long a space.

Through the whole course of this tedious and fruitless investigation, facts impower me to say, that, in the judgment of the unprejudiced part of Europe, our behaviour was manifestly dictated by reasons of state; but I appeal to your frankness and generosity to declare, whether the behaviour of your countrymen did not result from counting-house conferences and deliberations.

How different these from the times when Mauritius fought your battles, and our Elizabeth seconded him with a spirit worthy of the cause he so successfully maintained! Your Excellency cannot but recollect how well your then warlike ancestors knew how to reconcile their political with their commercial interests. You must well remember the speech of Admiral Warmund to that great Princess, wherein he told her, with a freedom becoming the chief of a very important embassy, and worthy of a man who had been the companion of Essex in his victories over Spain, that his countrymen were determined to suffer

no motives of gain to warp them from the resolution they had unanimously taken, never to submit to any terms of peace with the Spanish ministry, but such as were clearly consistent with their safety and honour: that it behoved her to consider her kingdom as united in a necessary confederacy with Holland: that if the one fell, the other could not stand:—concluding with this remarkable advice, That the English, if they acted wisely, would keep the war at a distance from their island, by engaging the enemy abroad, and assisting effectually those who were fighting for the common cause: that if the United Provinces were subdued, so dreadful an augmentation of power, supported by the wealth of both the Indies, would render Spain decisively an overmatch for England, and occasion her infallibly to become the prey of that rapacious monarchy.

The wisdom of this gallant officer, and able negociator, was not lost upon such a court as that of Elizabeth. Your Excellency knows the favourable answer he carried back to his constituents, and what marks of respect and esteem he received from that illustrious Queen.

May I be permitted to expatiate on this anecdote, which bears a strong analogy to

the present conjuncture of affairs between Great Britain and Holland?

Spain, at the forementioned æra, was not less formidable than the House of Bourbon is at the present hour. She had made an entire and complete conquest of Portugal, and all its dependencies. This gave her the full possession of both the Indies. In Europe she was mistress of the better part of Italy, of Franche Comté, and of all the Low Countries, the Seven Provinces excepted, then far inferior to the other ten, in point of riches and population: her armies were more numerous than those of her adversaries, and chiefly composed of veterans: her officers and generals had hardly their equals. In this condition of strength and opulence, her contest with her revolted subjects would have been quickly decided to their ruin, had not the councils and arms of England interfered for their preservation.

Your Excellency will not, I flatter myself, reject the comparison I shall here presume to make between the situation of Holland at that memorable period, and the very critical circumstances Great Britain is in at present. True it is, the strength of this kingdom is great, and its spirit still greater; but as the courage of the Dutch at that time, however
heroic

heroic and persevering, would not probably, if unassisted, have effected their deliverance from tyranny, in the same manner, it is much to be apprehended, that, notwithstanding we may, through unanimity, and by prodigious exertions of valour, maintain our national independence, and even retain many, if not most of our possessions; yet reason tells us, that if we are not only forsaken by all, but attacked or counteracted by most of the European powers, great as our valour and resources are universally confest, we must expect, in the end, to sit down with heavy losses, and with a considerable diminution of the strength we yet possess.

In such a situation, it is surprising that no state should take the alarm at the danger necessarily arising to the liberties of Europe from this unnatural confederacy against them.

I cannot suppose that your Excellency does not evidently perceive this important truth. Equally am I persuaded, that every sensible person in Europe perceives it.

How it happens that so alarming a conviction should be unproductive of a timely opposition to the designs of the House of Bourbon, can only be accounted for by recurring to that unhappy disposition, which converts ministers

nisters of state into merchants, and places merchants and traders at the head of the state.

Voltaire has thought proper, somewhere, to stile the Dutch nation a mercantile Society. Were he living, he would now find ample cause to justify his opinion.—A stronger instance of degeneracy, in a great and respectable people, from their former sense and wisdom, cannot be produced in history.

I have examined, with the firmest determination of impartiality, all that I can recollect to have been alledged in justification of your Excellency's constituents; but the more I revolve the arguments used in their favour, the more I am convinced of their futility, and of the intentional prevarication of those who employ them.

A retrospect of past transactions will set this matter in a proper point of view.

The study of those who have successfully managed the concerns of the United Provinces, has undeviatingly been to keep them clear of the embarrassments, resulting either from mixing too officiously in the quarrels of their neighbours, or from paying no attention to them; to secure the independence of the state, by forming alliances with those who were to find their interest in supporting it, and to regulate their commerce in such wise, as

not

not to interfere with that of other nations, whose power was able to endanger it.

On these maxims the prosperity of the United Provinces has long been secured, as it was from their beginning first erected.

But who will say, these maxims are a text, of which the times are by any means a faithful comment? They are a text from which the present conduct of the States General has widely departed, and which, if we are to judge from political symptoms, the Dutch either do not, or will not, expound according to its primitive meaning.

All states have a code of politics peculiar to themselves, originating from their situation, their government, and a variety of other local and national considerations.

The system of policy, both internal and external, framed for the Dutch commonwealth, had the advantage of being the work of the most judicious politicians, at a very enlightened æra. An Aldegond, a Culemborg, to mention no others, were men every way worthy of being associates and co-operators with the first William, your illustrious founder.

What these begun, in the midst of difficulties and trials of every sort, was perfected in more auspicious times, by the successful labours of a Mauritius, a John of Nassau, a Hohenlo,

Hohenlo, a Barneveld, and a multitude of other great characters, which it were equally needless and presumptuous to lay before your Excellency.

Under such men, no government, no constitution could fail to prosper; the latter, especially, was a luminary of knowledge, from whom, not only Holland, but England and France had frequent occasions to receive the brightest rays of direction in the most arduous cases. Henry the fourth and Elizabeth often profited by his wisdom.

But it must be acknowledged, the maxims adopted by these great men, though tending all to freedom, peace, and commerce, were not of a tame and servile nature. Barneveld's answer to a Spanish deputy from archduke Albert, is particularly worth recording, as it applies strongly to the present conjuncture of affairs. Your Excellency recollects with how much pomp and haughtiness the Spaniard was boasting of the advantages the Dutch would reap, by returning to the allegiance and protection of the greatest monarch in the world; and, by way of proof, insisted much on the felicity the Low Countries had enjoyed, under the triumphant reign of Charles the fifth, when they possessed almost the whole trade of Europe, and on the calamities

calamities they had experienced ever since their defection. But mark the answer of your magnanimous countryman. True it is, said he, that we wish for peace and commerce; but there is an outwork to be carried before we arrive at them; this outwork is freedom, without which there is no security for the other two.

This answer, when duly considered, comprehends a lively refutation of the maxims that seem at present to guide the resolutions of your Excellency's constituents; and which argue a strange difference of opinion, on matters of the highest moment, between the persons who now direct the affairs of your country, and those who directed them at the period above mentioned, so much, and so justly celebrated in your annals.

A precarious tenure of political advantages, was by no means deemed an object worthy of their pursuit. They knew that security alone was the basis of their permanency; and could arise only from the enjoyment of a freedom uncontrouled by foreign influence, and unindangered by those checks, which too large a proportion of power will ever invite ambitious princes to exercise on their less potent neighbours.

Thus, your Excellency must allow, they acted

acted on the very reverse of the plan now apparently taking place in the conduct of their successors.

This plan, so unworthy of the good sense and courage hitherto exerted by your countrymen — so much beneath the dignity they have been so careful to maintain — cannot, in truth and strictness, be justly called their own: it is a mixture of avarice and pusillanimity, artfully imported from abroad, and propagated by the basest mercenaries among the unwary and the unintelligent, who are always numerous in every country: when to this class of men is added that of false patriots, and pretenders to public spirit, the aggregate of these various denominations becomes too formidable a body to manage and cope with by ordinary means.

You will perceive, from this manner of accounting for the system now prevalent on your side of the water, how much reluctance an Englishman must feel, should he find himself obliged, by the force of facts, to withdraw his respect and veneration from those meetings at the Hague, that were wont to command so much esteem throughout the political world.

Of the multifarious rules, projected by the judgment, or the fancy of men, for the government

vernment of states, there is one wherein they all concur with singular unanimity; which is, that want of spirit is the worst of all defects in the composition of a statesman.

This is a fault of which I most heartily acknowledge the predecessors of your Excellency's constituents were never guilty. On the contrary, when they engaged in the quarrels with this nation, mentioned in the preceding letters, though they did it in opposition to the manifest rules of good policy, still they acted with a spirit worthy of the reputation they possessed at that time; and the contest was equally honourable to both nations, as far as valour and heroism on either side could render it.

It is now upwards of a century since the sword was sheathed between Great Britain and Holland. I need not explain how inconsiderately it was drawn by each of the combatants, and how much more in compliance with personal than with national purposes.

Let us hope that a repetition of such errors will never be carried to the length which our mutual enemies have long had in contemplation.

But, in order to justify this hope, it will behove your countrymen, to compare their
conduct

conduct with that of their ancestors; and if a disagreement is found between their respective methods of government, ingenuously to revert to that adopted by their forefathers, in preference to that which is now recommended to their choice. Experience calls aloud in favour of the former, while danger and uncertainty attend the latter.

Your Excellency has often reflected, with grief, on the unhappy divisions that brought the great Barneveld to an end so unworthy of him. Great in his death, as in his life, he employed his last moments in the service of his country: anxious to inculcate the maxims above mentioned, which, in conjunction with other patriots, he had laid down as a rule never to be departed from, and had experimentally proved of essential importance, he died, as it were, bequeathing them to posterity.

Well may we consider the dying words of so celebrated a statesman as a legacy, amply deserving the thanks and the acceptance of his country. They have been long thought such; and it were a melancholy reflection, that an adherence to them should cease, at a time when it is so much wanted.

But to come closer in with a matter, which is reducible to the clearest precision, your Excellency

cellency will condescend to weigh, with your usual candour, the great rule observed, as well as prescribed, by those who have held the reins of administration in any country with approbation and success.

The prime care of all true politicians has ever been, to divest themselves of the idea, that their country, however powerful, is totally independent. The reciprocal wants of mankind will always produce connections between different countries, and these connections establish a natural and necessary dependence.

If the idea of absolute independence is repugnant to the well-being of the powerfulest people, it is in the highest degree incompatible with the welfare of one in a state of natural mediocrity.

But if a nation should, through labour, industry, and good government, emerge from mediocrity to grandeur, and from poverty to opulence, as it could not arrive at such a change without uncommon exertions, and without very beneficial connections with other countries, it behoves it, more than others, to be continually observant of all that passes there, and to consider its prosperity as depending very essentially on the systems and designs they have in view.

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Your Excellency will readily admit these principles to be particularly applicable to such a state as Holland.

There are few countries for which nature has done less, than that which is inhabited by the Dutch; but there is none, for which the ingenuity and the industry of the inhabitants have done more.

Your illustrious countryman, Grotius, frankly acknowledges the four elements had degenerated, in Holland, and were (if I may use such an expression to convey his meaning) under par, with regard to other regions.

The famous Pitcairn, who, by long residence, well knew the nature of Holland, and the genius of its natives, was so profoundly struck with admiration at the innumerable proofs of their singular endowments and sagacity, that he never dwelt upon the subject, without feeling a kind of enthusiasm, arising from the reflexion, what human abilities could perform.

Warmed with these noble feelings, he celebrated the deeds of your Excellency's countrymen, in those immortal lines which were inspired by sublimity itself, and which do as much honour to his memory as to those in whose praise they were composed *. Sannazario's on

* *Tellurem fecere Dei, sua Littora Belgæ; &c.*

much a similar subject, the genius of the Venetians, and the grandeur of Venice, are, one may impartially say, much inferior.

It affords me peculiar satisfaction, that a native of this island should have signalized himself so conspicuously in describing the virtues and great qualities of the natives of Holland. It were to be wished, that a like strain of impartiality would characterize the temper and disposition of the Dutch nation, respecting the people of Great Britain.

Impelled by a sense of the homage due to truth, I have, perhaps with some impropriety, wandered into a digression, unnecessary to the present purpose. The same spirit of veracity obliges me now to proceed in quite another stile than that of praise.

When I consider what great things the natives of Holland have done for their country, I think it is impossible for a serious man to contain his indignation, that so sensible, so judicious a people, should be guilty of such gross absurdities, such perversions of judgment, in matters of at least as much importance and concern, as any that ever came under their cognizance.

I speak of them no longer (your Excellency will perceive) in the light of possessors and managers of the land and soil they inha-

bit ; but as a political body of individuals, connected with other nations by commerce and by treaties, subsisting in a manner peculiar to themselves, and deriving whatever they possess, merely from their superior industry in all things relating to trade.

A people in such very remarkable circumstances should, of all others, be perpetually on the watch. They should look narrowly into every attempt made among their neighbours, relative either to commerce or to war. This latter, especially, should sum up all their faculties, to divert its influence from their concerns ; war being the greatest enemy to a trading nation : they ought therefore by no means to provoke it, either by engaging therein directly, without the most unavoidable necessity ; or indirectly, by suffering an appetite for gain to make them transgress the bounds of national faith and integrity.

In the mean time, they should not confine their views to the meer temporary or partial interest of individuals : they should bear it continually in mind, that it may sometimes become expedient and necessary to suspend, or even to sacrifice, particular branches of trade, in order to secure the existence of a state, having no other fund to depend on, than

than the general preservation of its commerce.

These are often the only means, by which they can retain the good-will of other powers, or fulfil the spirit of the only alliances they should ever form; which ought constantly to be with those states, the interest of which is, to suffer no disproportion of strength to increase to such a height, as to render any prince or people too formidable for the general safety.

Such are the ideas which, I believe, will occur on a proper consideration of the case of Holland, in relation to the European powers,

In so critical a predicament, have the Dutch conducted themselves with that wariness and circumspection, which the perilous posture of public affairs requires in every state at this day?

An answer to this question will be obtained, by inquiring into their behaviour since the first breaking-out of hostilities between Great Britain and France.

I hope your Excellency is convinced, that I neither aim at aggravating, what is of itself sufficiently offensive, nor at exciting irritation in minds already too susceptible of resentment, for the mischiefs they have brought upon themselves.

My sole intent is, by a faithful representa-

tion of things, as they are, to prove how much your countrymen have deviated from that line of justice and attachment they owe to this nation ; and to shew, at the same time, how much it behoves them to return into that track of amity to us, of which we have never afforded them any cause to repent.

When, contrary to the long-established laws of nations—when, in defiance of common honesty—in contempt of the most solemn promises of neutrality, and even of friendship, the court of France thought proper to throw aside the mask of the basest and most disgraceful dissimulation, and openly to avow its adherence to our revolted colonies ; in what manner did the people of Holland receive the news of so insulting a declaration, so injurious to the interests of their best and surest ally, and consequently so dangerous to their own ?

Had they pondered, with any degree of seriousness, on the nature of such a proceeding, would they not have discovered a most shameful violation of the rights of a free state ? would they not have foreseen the alarming consequences of suffering any state to encroach so deeply on the sovereignty of another, as to dictate the terms and conditions it should grant in the settlement of its internal
dissensions

diffensions between government and people ? Would they not have looked with detestation on the insolence of a power, daring enough to declare the subjects of another power independent of their sovereign, and to invite the rest of the world to join in effecting their emancipation ?

Your Excellency will not take offence at the warmth of my expressions ; they are dictated by a just resentment at an atrocity of behaviour hitherto unprecedented in Europe.

Ready am I to allow, and I am sure you cannot fail to admit, that, of all modern nations, the French are passingly remarkable for the facility with which they can break through treaties and engagements, however solemn and binding.

But the present instance unquestionably outdoes every proof they have so frequently given, of the perfidiousness of their disposition in political matters. It sets, as it were, a seal to the truth of the reproaches, so often, and so justly cast on the ministries of that monarchy ; and empowers all Europe to treat them with scorn and contempt, whenever they shall have the effrontery to talk of public faith and the laws of nations.

After having vented our indignation at

such enormities, there still remains a consideration of so calamitous an importance, that we forget our wrath, in order to indulge our compassion for the miseries with which mankind is threatened by this atrocious conduct of the French.

Your Excellency will, I doubt not, unite in the persuasion, that the present politics of the court of France, will be productive of the most fatal consequences, in the future operations of potentates and nations.

They open a prospect shocking to the feelings of discerning men, who possess the least remnant of humanity.

What, but horrors of every denomination, can result from a breach of those common, ordinary ties, that support the necessary intercourse of public bodies; upon which the worst of men venture to place confidence, and which the most abandoned characters have hitherto respected?

The French may now boast of having brought about a most remarkable epocha. They have taught the world, that henceforth it will be the height of imprudence to put their trust in treaties; and that force alone, continually maintained, and continually exerted, must hereafter be the shield, with which

nations

nations are to guard themselves. — Would to God they had no abettors of this doctrine!

Thus your Excellency sees how well-founded the apprehensions of some late politicians were, when they express a dread, that, from the immensity of their military strength, and the unbounded ambition it inspired, some European powers would at last be tempted to overleap all fences, and to make their sword alone the measure of their dealings with the rest of the world.

What a view of futurity have we now before us! To what end are princes and states to appoint places for the meeting of their respective deputies, when we are conscious, that whatever may be settled there, will avail nothing, and be forgotten, the first moment a favourite scheme is ripe for execution?

Without writing a panegyric on former times, it cannot be denied, that, even in their deviations from national integrity, a degree of dignity was preserved, and the observation of forms looked upon as necessary; but the present day affords an alarming proof, that even common decency is forgotten.

The powers of Europe are now in the condition of a man armed at all points, who, after having performed the severest duty, dares
not

not put off his military accoutrements. What must follow from such unnatural exertions, but debility and certain death? and what has Europe to expect, but to sink into inevitable ruin, through the perpetual load of that heavy armour, in which ambition and rapaciousness delight to see it clad.

What I have laid before your Excellency, will not appear declamatory, while the evidence of facts so notoriously vouches for it. The evils here complained of are glaring; the public has long been witness of them; and such individuals throughout Europe as dare speak their minds, and retain the least sense of honesty, will bear testimony to the truth of what has been asserted.

It is with heartfelt concern an Englishman beholds this dreadful subversion of those principles, in the political system of Europe, which will cost so much blood to this country, before it can restore them; if that, indeed, be practicable, in the seeming universal wreck of public probity, which the example of France will too probably occasion.

It is with still greater concern an Englishman must behold, I will not say the indifference, but the apparent satisfaction, expressed throughout the majority of the inhabitants of the United Provinces, on being apprized of
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the declaration of France in favour of the Americans.

The fresh difficulties wherein Great Britain became involved, appeared in no other light to the Dutch, than as a further impediment thrown in the way of the just right she claimed, to suffer no manner of assistance to be given to her revolted colonies.

Before the French court had undertaken an open and direct support of their cause, nothing is better known, than the readiness with which the subjects of the States General supplied them with whatever they could pay for. The quantities of arms, ammunition, and stores of all sorts, exported from the ports of Holland for the use of the Americans, is no secret to the world.

It was in the midst of the profits resulting from this iniquitous trade, that France took the shameless determination to stop no longer at an indirect countenance of our American colonists.

The news was, your Excellency well knows, received in Holland with a kind of transport. They had before stood in some dread of the resentment of Great Britain, for their abettance of the Americans; but they now threw off all restraints: they boldly avowed their resolution to supply, not only them,

them, but every other enemy we might have to encounter; and, strange to tell, they had the audacity to rest such inimical pretensions on the faith of treaties.

I have already examined the validity and purport of those treaties; and I hold the character of your Excellency in such veneration, that it is not possible for me to doubt a single instant, your averfeness to concur in opinion, that any treaty can give your countrymen a right to act an hostile part towards Great Britain.

Still, however, these treaties were clamorously insisted on, and were every way tortured to extract from them a meaning detrimental to the interest of the British nation.

When the good sense and firmness of this country was discovered to be proof against the violence of faction, on your side of the water, I am not to inform you of the representations that were directed to be formally made to the British ministry; your Excellency's official interference in that business, is by no means any proof that it met with your approbation.

In the mean time, the spirit of avarice was found too powerful for those unprejudiced individuals in Holland, who remonstrated to their fellow-subjects the dangers that must
accrue

accrue from siding so decisively against Great Britain. The partizans of France had gained too much ground to give up the contest; and the tide became so strong and so popular, in their favour, that it swept away all obstruction.

Here let us make a stand, and review that complication of motives, which weighed so powerfully with the people in Holland, as to stifle all sentiments of amity for the people of Great Britain, and to efface all recollection of the necessity of remaining united with this country.

The great and ostensible motives held up by the leaders of the French faction, to the view and protection of the public, were, the prodigious advantages that would accrue from an unconfined commerce, in branches of business productive of vast profit.

In order to secure these advantages, they further alledged the expediency of procuring respect to the flag of the United Provinces; hence followed, of course, the necessity of equipping a naval armament sufficient to enforce it.

Thus, by degrees, they advanced on to resolves of a more serious nature: they openly proclaimed a resolution to carry on the trade we so grievously complained of, in whatever manner they should think proper, in defiance
of

of all considerations and menaces, and to support it by force of arms, if necessary.

By such unhappy gradations have faction in some, avarice in many, and delusion in almost all, brought the affairs of your country into one of the most dangerous situations they ever were in; the more dangerous, on account of the affected security of many individuals of consequence, and of the real want of discernment in the ignorant and deluded multitude.

In this description of the present political state of Holland, your Excellency will easily trace a strong resemblance of the condition it was in, at that period of the last century which preceded its invasion by Lewis XIV. The similitude cannot escape those who, judging of events to come by past transactions, examine with any accuracy the leading features of nations, at the remarkable epochs of their history.

At the time I speak of, the people of the United Provinces, though shortly before engaged in a contest wherein they had displayed equal skill and courage, were unaccountably fallen into such an oblivion of the public interests of the state, as totally to neglect them: Peace and Trade were become both the motto and sole object of the Dutch nation; all things
else

else were thoroughly slighted. In the mean time, France was meditating its destruction, and making preparations for that purpose; not forgetting, however, its usual policy, of colouring over its operations with pretences of a very different complexion.

So prevalent was the spirit of infatuation in Holland at that unhappy juncture, and so strong the prepossession in favour of the French, that, notwithstanding the celebrated Dewit was at the head of their councils, no suspicion was entertained of the designs of France, till very little more than two months before they began to be carried into execution. Peter, the son of the illustrious Grotius, the Dutch ambassador at Paris, was negotiating with the ministry of Lewis XIV. in January, and the French armies were on their way to Holland in March. — I allude to the transactions of the famous seventy-second year of the last century.

What is meant to be inculcated by this retrospect is, that your Excellency's constituents, though not so near to the period of immediate danger, as their ancestors were at the epocha above-mentioned, are precisely in the same predicament, that single circumstance excepted, of proximity to the ruin which is planning for them.

But, however remote it may prove, no man

of sound understanding does not firmly believe it in agitation.

There are some cases when even the least clear-sighted, unless blinded by the basest interest, are fully able to discern what is most conducive to their welfare. Our James the First was never deemed a profound politician; yet, before his accession to the English throne, when Philip the Second of Spain had made him secret overtures, in order to engage the assistance of Scotland against England by land, while his mighty armada attacked it by sea—James too well understood his own situation, to give the least ear to the great promises and offers made him by the Spanish monarch; and, though he had causes of resentment and dissatisfaction, he had sense enough to sacrifice private piques to the safety of the kingdom he possessed, and to that of which he expected the reversion.

Your Excellency's countrymen flatter themselves, in a manner very unworthy of their reputed wisdom, when they endeavour to reconcile the present lucre they derive from our distresses, with their own future security. They ought long since to have discovered the absolute necessity of making their option; they cannot possibly promise themselves the enjoyment of both. The error of which they

have been guilty, to give it the softest name, in going already so far out of the way of their real interest, will possibly cost both us and them more than they have gained by it, before the mischiefs occasioned thereby are thoroughly repaired; but if they persist therein much longer, those mischiefs may possibly become too great for any remedy.

These truths, so obvious to reflection, seemed to have no existence in the apprehensions of the majority of Dutch traders; their thoughts were wholly engrossed with the means of making the most they could by the misfortunes of Great Britain.

As soon as they saw the standard of France fully displayed against this kingdom, they lost not a moment in emptying on board their merchantmen the magazines of naval stores they had been collecting against this long-expected event. Their ships crowded to the French ports; and, had there subsisted an alliance offensive and defensive between Holland and France, the latter could not have been served with more diligence and alacrity by the former.

One might think, that, in a quarrel wherein Holland must feel how deeply Great Britain was interested, the States General would have checked the illicit ardour of their people in

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the pursuit of gain, and have not permitted any trade, evidently detrimental and destructive to this country.

An ample field of commerce lay before them : innumerable articles of profit remained in their hands, to carry on a most lucrative, as well as legal, business with France.

The only favour we requested of them, was, not to supply our enemies with naval stores, nor to cover their property by Dutch names and bottoms.

But, not content with the immense profits arising from every other quarter, these branches of trade were coveted, with an avidity that seemed to increase in proportion to our complaints against them, and to the injury we thereby sustained.

Such an unfriendly treatment on the part of a nation that styled itself our friend and ally, though it excited our indignation, did not provoke our revenge. With a temperateness and moderation which the impartial world will never mention without applause, we rested satisfied with the capture of the supplies destined for our enemy ; and, with that generosity which characterizes our regard for national faith, we indemnified those false friends, for what necessity alone compelled

pelled us to prevent them from carrying to our foes.

This mildness and forbearance on our part, was answered by the bitterest reproaches: the pirates of Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco, became objects of comparison for the British nation; and no language was thought too opprobrious for us throughout the Seven Provinces. At Amsterdam, especially, the name of an Englishman became a term of vilification; and we were posted up, in a manner, as a tribe of robbers and banditti.

If the moderation observed by the British government, in this disagreeable affair, had not a due influence over my pen, it were an easy matter to shew which of the parties best deserved those illiberal appellations.

But, without having recourse to scandal and abuse, which prove nothing on either side, let us proceed with steadiness and impartiality in the further examination of this unhappy subject.

When once the minds of men are thoroughly heated, instead of attending to arguments that might allay their warmth, they become incensed at those who use them; whom, for that very reason, they consider as abettors of their adversaries.

Thus it was in Holland; where they who

argued dispassionately, were marked out as enemies to their country, and undeserving the name of Dutchmen.

And yet, I will, with your Excellency's permission, be bold to say, that no cause was ever more deserving, and more susceptible of a just and able defence, than that of Great Britain.

While the colonies alone, that had shaken off our allegiance, took up the operations of our fleets and armies, we tacitly passed over many irregularities on the part of the Dutch traders; whom we might, in strict justice, have called to a severe account, for the daringness of their proceedings in favour of our revolted subjects.

But when we had a full view of the designs of France—when we were openly apprized of the negotiations she had been carrying on, and of the alliance she had formed with America—it was no longer a time to preserve a passiveness, that might have been construed into timidity. New scenes were opening, of far other importance than the preceding; and all the strength and faculties of Great Britain were now summoned into action.

The spring of Seventy-eight saw the navies of France preparing to meet us on our element, and her coast lined with troops, menacing

nacing this island with an invasion. Her ports were filled with shipping from our colonies, freighted with all the assistance she could afford them, to strengthen their resistance, and to prolong the calamities of war.

The fact was, that France had long been waiting for an opportunity to indemnify herself for former losses, and to be revenged for the disgraces that had befallen her arms in the last war.

A dismemberment of the British empire was an idea that now offered itself to her councils, in all the splendor of well-founded expectation. To deprive an ancient enemy of his hereditary possessions, to strip a victorious rival of his most valuable conquests, was too brilliant a temptation for ambition and inveteracy to resist.

Notwithstanding the resources of France were by no means on a prosperous footing, every nerve was strained, in order to forward a scheme that seemed, in the wishes of the enemies to Great Britain, pregnant with infallible success.

In this tremendous situation, surrounded with threats and dangers, was it proper for this nation to neglect any means of defence? was it to be expected that we should not assault our enemy, in whatever shape we found

him, whether in his own person, or screened by the mask of pretended friendship?

Whatever may be thought of the merits or the unhappy contest, subsisting between the British Colonies and their Mother Country, this may with truth be said — that such a government as that of France, is, the least of any, entitled to foster the maxims asserted by the Americans: they are essentially opposite to the principles on which her monarchy is founded; and every Frenchman, who professes himself a loyal subject to his King, and to the constitution of his country, is equally bound in reason and in conscience to detest them.

Were the schools and universities of France to broach a doctrine similar to that adopted by America, the Bastile, or the Galleys, would soon be the residence of its professors. When the French therefore attempt to plead the cause of our Colonies, and mention the inherent rights of human nature, and other topics of that kind, let them look to themselves, and blush, if they can, for their impertinence.

But to what end should we discuss these points, now become trite and tedious, through the frequency and fulsomeness of the investigations they have undergone? The sword is now drawn, and France drew it to no other
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intent than our destruction, abstracted from all motives of friendship for the Americans, or of partiality to their cause: this, in the nature of things, she cannot fail to hold in abhorrence; and them she is known to undervalue, in their individual character, and to consider altogether as meer tools to work with in the prosecution of her designs; ready to throw them away, the moment she finds they cannot any longer be serviceable.

Such are, your Excellency well knows, the sentiments of the ministers and courtiers at Versailles. The pompous reception of the American deputies there, and the affected demonstrations of respect with which they were treated, imposed on the feelings of none but of the vulgar.

The public at Paris, as in all other capitals of absolute monarchies, applauded the measures of their government; and were lavish, beyond measure, of their praises on the chief of the American deputation: but, in the profusion of civilities paid to Doctor Franklyn, it was easy to perceive, in those who were at the head of affairs, an eagerness to urge him forward, in the business he came upon, amounting to precipitation, and at the same time, a dilatoriness in furthering their own part of the scheme, that clearly shewed how truly

they intended, the independence of America should be purchased with the blood of the Americans only ; and that the promises of France were made with no other view, than to encourage them to exert what remained of their almost exhausted strength, without any determination to succour them otherwise, than by making a parade of fleets and armies in the vicinity of Great Britain : Thus leaving them to the events of a purposed prolongation of the war ; which would, at all hazards, consume the force and waste the resources of Great Britain and her Colonies ; and in the end insure the ruin of both, and prevent them, should a re-union, so much dreaded by France, take place, from becoming again the formidable enemy they were before.

Such were apparently the designs, and such the plan adopted in the councils of France, when she publicly took a decided part in the dispute between Great Britain and her Colonies.

Here I shall pause, and, reserving to another occasion a further address on this important matter, I remain, with all due respect, &c.

Sir,

Your Excellency's, &c.

LETTER IV.

SIR,

I Concluded my last letter to your Excellency, with the prospect of the general views of France in forming her connections with America.

It cannot be denied, that an air of probability attended the project laid before her: like a two-edged sword, it was contrived to cut either way: whether she succeeded in severing the members from the head, or whether, after having shed the ill blood produced by fatal jealousies, a conviction of their reciprocal interest would at last reunite them, still a continuance of the dreadful dissensions, which had ensanguined the plains of North America, could not lose its effect; and a diminution of the wealth and power of the British empire, must of course prove their consequence.

All these ideas crowded to the minds of the
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French ministry, when they signed the treaty of February, seventy-eight, with the deputies of the Congress.

When your Excellency ponders on these transactions—when your knowledge and experience of the world awakens in your mind the sensations of anxiety and alarm, naturally felt on so trying an occasion by the people of this island—you will cordially allow the rectitude of their complaints of the partiality shewn to France, from so many quarters, whence she little deserved, and we less expected it.

A war between Great Britain and France has always been considered as an object of the primest importance. The powers of Europe have always bestowed the most serious attention on every quarrel betwixt these two monarchies. Their respective aims and pretensions are well known; and cannot fail, therefore, to interest every thinking people in their quarrels.

The manifest aims of France, to this day, have irrefutably been to obtain a degree of influence throughout the European states, amounting almost to a dictation or superintendence of their politics and councils.

The pretensions of Great Britain, on the other hand, have as unremittingly been, to set

set her face against such arrogance, and to restrain all attempts, tending to establish a practice of domineering.

Hitherto Great Britain has been successful; and her victorious efforts, in this often-contended field, have been attended with the general applause of Europe.

But the satisfaction with which our triumphs were formerly beheld, exists no more. The good-will of the European nations to Great Britain, has been on the decrease for some years; and seems to have been succeeded by a general spirit of envy and malevolence, much resembling that which both Spain and France experienced in former days, while their power and their pride were at the height; the first under the reign of Philip the Second, the latter under that of Lewis the Fourteenth.

Whence this inimical disposition to us may have arisen, is not difficult to trace: all nations have tasted of it, more or less, in the hour of their prosperity; and must not impute it to any other cause, than the natural impatience and fretfulness of men, at seeing others in a better condition than themselves.

They who attribute it to political considerations alone, go wide of the mark: true it is, those powers who mean to avail themselves

selves of this jealous disposition, foment it with all possible industry ; and, in order to give it an honourable sanction, endeavour to found it upon motives of policy : but such attempts, though they may, and unfortunately do succeed with the uninformed and the inattentive, who compose the bulk of mankind, have no influence on the judicious.

This part of society is, however, very small, and has much less to say in the government of human affairs, than the generality of people imagine. If we look into the arrangement and constitution of the various courts, it will presently appear, that personal artfulness and dexterity have a much more certain claim to the management of the most important business, than the most splendid abilities without them.

These are usually confined to promotions of a secondary class : they who possess them, are obliged, for their own sake, to make them subservient to the views and purposes of their employers, and frequently become the drudges of measures, of which the superiority of their understanding fully comprehends the impropriety ; but which, like soldiers who fight for their pay, they are forced to carry into execution.

This accounts for the astonishing supineness,

ness, with which the world sees the progress made by France in collecting every where such a mass of strength, in order to crush the power of Great Britain.

This power, however formidable, has never been exercised for the purposes of pride: it has constantly espoused the cause of the weak and the oppressed. France alone, and her associates, have felt its operations; and, in revenge for the state of humiliation it has more than once reduced her to, would now fain insinuate, that Great Britain has succeeded to her plans of ambition, and is taking the lead in disturbing the world, and in framing pretences, through the immensity of her commercial opulence and naval greatness, to become the umpire of Europe.

If your Excellency will please to recollect the grounds of complaint, formed by those potentates who engaged in the league of Cambray, against the Republic of Venice, not long after the commencement of the sixteenth century, you will find the same spirit of envy inspiring their measures, and exhaling itself in terms not very essentially different from those which France endeavours to justify by her emissaries.

The truth was, that Venice was then what Great Britain is now, the center of Euro-

pean riches and commerce : through industry, through prudence, and a strain of policy, of which the rest of Europe hardly understood the merit, that sagacious people had raised themselves to a degree of opulence and power, which, from its brilliancy, was become offensive to the sight of their cotemporaries.

And yet, when this splendid situation of the Venetians at that day, is thoroughly and candidly investigated, we can find nothing therein to warrant the offence taken by their neighbours. They had invaded no territories but those of their enemies ; they had forcibly wrested no branch of trade from any other state ; they were punctual in their dealings with other nations ; their behaviour was respectful to the great princes who surrounded them ; and they were too wise, unnecessarily to involve themselves in any of their quarrels ; well knowing that a state like theirs, thriving and depending upon commerce alone for its prosperity, had no need of any further aggrandisement ; and ought to aim at no more, than at security from foreign dominion.

Notwithstanding the rigid practice of these maxims, that celebrated Republic had the singular misfortune of incurring the ill-will of its most potent neighbours. Italy, Germany, and
France

France associated for its destruction, as if they really had imagined, that nothing less than such a confederacy was able to prevent the Venetians from lording it over the rest of Europe.

In this extraordinary alliance, your Excellency will, upon examination, perceive some features very similar to those that mark the present inimical temper towards Great Britain. Notwithstanding the rivalry, then commencing, between the houses of Austria and of France, we see Lewis the Twelfth, and the emperor Maximilian, heartily joining hands upon this occasion. Such an union was the more astonishing, as the latter of these princes bore so rooted and illiberal a hatred to the French politics, court, and even nation, that he constantly carried about him a book, wherein he carefully noted every real or imaginary cause to be offended at their proceedings.

In the same manner we now behold a junction of interests, till this hour thought incompatible : we see the ministers of potentates, who, if they do not, might easily keep a register of the ill offices done and intended them by France, suffering themselves to be over-reached by that insidious power, and uniting in its views with as much cordiality,

as if they were to receive high benefit from them; or, to speak the language of sterling truth, as if they had not every thing to apprehend from affording her a countenance, which must prove in the end so fatal to the tranquillity of Europe.

As the league framed by the above-mentioned princes against the Republic of Venice, was equally groundless, unjust, and impolitic; so is the conspiracy carried on openly or clandestinely against Great Britain, equally wanting in judgment and justice.

They who have entered into it with so short-sighted eagerness, have done it in compliance with the temper infused into them by the intrigues of the day.

French artifice and deceit, and perhaps French influence of another kind, have operated this strange reverse of things: Is it possible, otherwise, that her natural enemies would concur in forwarding her designs?

Here I must again, with your Excellency's permission, recur to the position I have already laid down—that we are not to take it for granted, the wisest heads have the direction of public affairs.

The power of Great Britain can never become an object of terror to Europe: they who now represent it in such light, either
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do not, or affect not to know the principles on which it is founded: they are no other than a strict adherence to the system, once so highly applauded, of preserving the balance of power abroad, and a mild equitable government of her subjects at home, productive of every encouragement to extend their commerce and augment their wealth, through the exertions of unconfined industry and genius.

What has been said respecting the case of the Republic of Venice, is entirely applicable to this nation.

As it might be thought affectation to go through the catalogue of our merits, as a people, no more need be said, than that, as the spirit and conduct of the Venetians extricated them from their unmerited distresses, in like manner the valour and wisdom of the British nation will, it is hoped, overcome the dishonourable combinations that are forming against us with so much warmth and so little reason.

But of all those who have entered the lists against her, none should weigh so momentous a measure with such deliberation, as your Excellency's constituents.

Instead of cavilling about the letter of treaties, and embracing with shameless avidity an unhappy occasion of adding to the creditor account of trading individuals, would it not

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have been more consistent with the character of sound politicians, to have done what they pretended to do, to have observed a real neutrality betwixt Great Britain and France, on the breaking-out of hostilities between them?

These two powers just entering into a war, of which the issue might affect all their neighbours, were not to be placed on a level with the sovereigns of Siam and of Cochin China, whose disputes may commence or terminate without benefit or detriment to the system of Europe; but was it so, or can it be so, with regard to Holland, and others beside, when Great Britain and France enter the field of contention?

They saw that ally attacked, on whom, experience tells them, they can always rely in the hour of danger — they saw him attacked by a power, on whose fidelity, in the general system of its politics, they were, through the same experience, conscious they could place no dependence — a power by whom their forefathers had been treated with the most barbarous insolence; and in the contests against whose ambition, there are still living witnesses in the United Provinces, how much Dutch blood was shed, and how much treasure expended, in the beginning of the present century.

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The same power, with an addition of strength, resuming its former projects, was certainly no object of complacency, for a state that had felt so deeply the blows received from it in the day of its prosperity; and if a disposition or means were wanting to assist an old and faithful ally, self-interest should have prevented covetousness from aiding an inveterate and perfidious enemy.

In the last war, Great Britain wished and wanted for no succours from abroad; and shewed, on the contrary, that she was able to spare them from her own stock to her foreign friends and well-wishers.

But the times are altered. America, the child of Britain, who was wont to stand by his parent in the day of battle, is now become his most dangerous foe.

Let us, however, drop metaphor, and use plain language; where a simple deduction of facts is sufficiently strong.

Your Excellency's constituents beheld us, not only deprived of our colonies, but engaged in a bloody quarrel with them.

This quarrel was carried on at the distance of three thousand miles from the mother-country. Hence, her expences were of course enormous.

By the accession of France to this alterca-
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tion, we had a new enemy to encounter, flushed with our disasters, and fresh from an uninterrupted peace of sixteen years.

Our strength at sea and land, which had before but one object, was now divided by two combatants; against both whom we soon perceived that equal efforts would become indispensibly necessary, if we meant to persevere in the dispute to any purpose.

In the mean time, the sinews of war began to employ a more serious attention than ever. The loss of our American trade, the additional danger accruing to our commerce from a French war, the fall of our stocks, the increase of taxes, from the necessity of large supplies, and, in the midst of these difficulties, our internal dissensions; all these together formed a chain of embarrassments, which afforded very serious matter of reflection for the monied men in Holland concerned in our funds, and a still more important one for the Dutch nation in general.

I do not present to your Excellency a mere picture of fancy: it becomes still more deserving of attention, when we add to it the further advantages with which France came into this contention.

In former wars she had always a multiplicity of objects in view; hence naturally resulted

sulted a division of her forces. In the war before the last, she was obliged to maintain, at the same time, large armies in Italy, in Germany, in Flanders. In the last war her military exertions in Germany were immense: but in the present case, her attention and expences were solely taken up with her navy; that alone ingrossed all her cares; she knew, that if she could find means to face Great Britain at sea, she would, at the long run, though not conquer, tire us, assisted as she was by America, and, I speak it with grief, befriended by your countrymen.

The establishment of a naval strength in France, equal to that of Great Britain, would place the former upon more than a footing of equality: the superiority in number of her land-forces would then be felt, in a manner that is impracticable while we retain the upper hand at sea.

This dominion we must at all hazards retain: it is a palladium, the loss of which will be followed by every possible calamity incident to a state: France wants nothing but naval stores to dispute it: we have, therefore, in the nature of things, the clearest right to prevent her from obtaining them, and, by the same course of argument, an equal right

to wrest them out of the hands of such as would supply the French with those instruments of our destruction.

Your Excellency must acknowledge, this is no matter of choice on our part. If we mean to preserve the existence of the British state, we must necessarily act with strenuousness against whatever aims directly at its fundamentals. If they who are lending their assistance to overturn it, meet with opposition, it is no more than they ought to expect; and for them to complain they are not suffered quietly to proceed, is adding the sneers of contempt to breach of friendship.

But this, I shall be told, is no breach of friendship: it is done with no intent to molest us, and wholly with a view to benefit themselves, abstracted from all other motives.

The answer to this method of reasoning is ready and decisive. When we seize the Dutch shipping laden with naval stores for the French ports, we mean no detriment to the owners; we seize only what is destined to strengthen our enemies: we seize the very implements they were to be furnished with to annoy us.

The proof we mean no detriment to the Dutch, is, that we pay them the full value
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of these seizures, and thereby make them full amends for the loss of time and industry employed in the service of our enemies. This, strictly speaking, is compensating their inability to hurt us. But what proofs have we they intend us no molestation, while they not only labour for our foes with marked eagerness and zeal, but account it a heavy grievance that these cannot reap the fruits of their exertions as well as themselves.

There are in all states, in all nations, certain objects of public attention and anxiety, which ought to be considered as a *non me tangere*. Friends will always pay a due regard to their safety and preservation, and foes only will endeavour to bring them into danger.

Of this nature is the naval superiority for which we contend. It is as necessary to Great Britain, as the dykes and mounds raised by the diligence and ingenuity of your countrymen, around the coast and shores of the United Provinces. Without them, the fury of the ocean would soon overwhelm a country that is incomparably the noblest monument of human industry; and without a more formidable fleet than that of the House of Bourbon, Great Britain lies open to invasion and ruin.

They who ask why this kingdom claims the prerogative of being allowed this superiority, are not therefore deserving of an answer: ignorance or insidiousness can only put such a question.

What has France, or its associates, to dread from Great Britain? At most, the accidental landing of inconsiderable bodies of troops, rather to shew the spirit of the British nation, than with a serious design of making any conquest. The experience of former ages has taught us too amply what to think of foreign acquisitions on the continent of Europe, to turn our wishes to so dangerous and destructive a quarter.

But what have not we to fear, on the other hand, should France have it in her power to invade us, whenever she thought proper?

Our insular situation, instead of an advantage, would, if France were mistress of the sea, become our greatest misfortune. Those, among the European powers, that, conscious of the danger threatening them all, would be solicitous to aid us, would then find it impracticable, and we should be abandoned, however unwillingly, to the same desperate exertions of valour that made us triumph over five times our numbers, in the plains of Cressy, of Poitiers, and of Azincourt.

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Thus your Excellency must acknowledge, that in whatever light this important subject is placed, there is no refuge for Great Britain, but in the most resolute prevention of all assistance to France, either directly or indirectly.

It is highly painful for Englishmen to be driven, as it were, to seek with so much care and solicitude for reasons and motives to induce your countrymen to abstain from labouring for our destruction.

What a stab to our feelings, therefore, must that perpetual citation of treaties be, which insults our understanding with a pretension of right in the Dutch to make such a claim, and of wrong in us to oppose it?

Enough, it is hoped, has been said on the subject of treaties, to clear away that rubbish of sophistry, which has been heaped on their meaning.

But while the Dutch erect their main arguments on that basis, may it not be necessary to raise a counter battery on the same foundation?

When they alledge against us the treaty of one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, may we not oppose the subsequent treaty, made four years after? may not we cite those that followed after the Revolution, under

der the reigns of William and Anne; particularly the barrier treaty, framed under the eye and auspices of that illustrious champion of Great Britain and Holland, the Duke of Marlborough?

How will the Dutch reconcile these treaties with their pretensions, and in what manner have they observed these treaties? A perusal of them will at one glance refute those claims. Their whole tenour pre-supposes every where a moral impossibility, that Great Britain and Holland should ever mistake their situation so far, as to differ in any points relating to their mutual welfare: they are full of reciprocal engagements to guarantee their various possessions, both domestic and foreign, in every quarter of the globe; and to send each other the speediest succours, if attacked: the specification of their political attachment is so strong, as to mention, in explicit terms, that if any power should make such hostile preparations, as indicated a design against either, it should be considered as a sufficient motive to arm immediately in each other's defence, and to dispatch the stipulated succours without further requisition or delay.

Such are the expressions contained in those celebrated conventions, made at a time, when
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the ambitious schemes of the House of Bourbon were not more manifest than at this hour ; but when her power was certainly much less.

Let those who doubt this assertion, attend to the dates of these different treaties : that of one thousand six hundred and seventy-eight, was concluded during the negociations carried on at Nimeguen for a general pacification ; while the neighbours of France were uniting on all sides in opposition to Lewis the Fourteenth, and Spain was yet his capital enemy.

Those that took place during the war terminated by the peace of Ryswick, in one thousand six hundred and ninety-seven, were made when the strength of France began visibly to decline, after the victory at La Hogue had broke her power at sea ; and after the bigotry of her monarch had deprived him of an incredible number of his most useful subjects, by the repeal of the edict of Nantz, and the expulsion of the French Protestants.

The famous barrier-treaty was signed in the midst of triumphs : the victories of Blenheim and Ramillies had given a decided superiority to the arms of Great Britain and Holland ; and the subsequent defeats of the French at Oudenarde, and at Malplaquet, with

with the total loss of Flanders, had reduced the affairs of France to so low an ebb, that she was ready to consent to the most humiliating terms, for the sake of obtaining peace.

When one reflects on the ardour and unanimity with which Great Britain and Holland espoused each other's cause at that epocha, one cannot avoid making another reflexion; which is, that if the Dutch acted judiciously then, in taking such measures against France, in the day of her distress, they cannot act wisely now, by abetting her cause, when she is become, by the union of the various branches of the House of Bourbon, incomparably more formidable.

In consequence of this union, and of the preparations made by France to invade this island, we availed ourselves of those treaties, to claim the succours therein stipulated: your Excellency remembers with what success.

Had the armies of France, instead of incamping on the shores of Normandy and Britany, pitched their tents in the proximity of those towns, assigned them by Great Britain as a barrier against the encroachments of the French, with what surprize and indignation would the Dutch have treated a refusal

refusal on our part, to comply with the promises made in that treaty?

But I doubt not your thoughts have anticipated my expressions, when I make bold to assert, that we should have fled to your assistance long before the enemy could have made an impression on your frontiers, and without obliging you to the repetition of a demand, which we should be convinced you had a right to make, and we an equal interest with yourselves to acquiesce in.

I leave your constituents to figure to themselves, what must have passed in the minds of our people, when they found such averfeness in the Dutch nation to fulfil their engagements with us, while, at the same time, they express such readiness to break through the strongest inhibition of treaties, in order to befriend our greatest enemies, the French.

In this manner has Great Britain been treated, in contradiction to the undeniable purport and spirit of treaties: in this manner has she been affronted by a semblance of friendship in words, and a series of enmity in deeds.

I am not ignorant it was alledged, when Great Britain testified rather her right than her expectation of receiving the assistance of
Holland,

Holland, that the condition of the latter was too critical for our demands: that it would prove a work of uncommon difficulty, and of imminent danger, to interfere in a quarrel of so peculiar a nature; of difficulty, on account of the fallen state of the Dutch navy, and the want of marine officers; and of danger, from the certainty of involving the States in a war with France; while it seemed unlikely that Great Britain would be able to co-operate effectually, in resisting the irruption of a French army into the Seven Provinces.

To these motives for declining a junction with Great Britain, was added another, of still greater weight; the insufficiency of the Dutch funds for the support of a war, which, when once begun, might extend its contagion to other parts, and at last become general throughout all Europe; and might therefore prove too expensive, from the subsidiary alliances they would, in all probability, be obliged to form, and the numerous armies they would be forced to maintain for the defence of their own territories.

I am willing to admit the truth of these allegations; which were warmly urged at the time by the partizans of France, as unanswerable: but their very truth is a powerful argument,

gument, I do not say for the Dutch engaging immediately in a war with France upon our account, but for settling their navy on a better footing, for augmenting their land forces, for looking into and improving the state of their finances, and for connecting themselves with those powers, who are known to behold the designs of France with a jealous eye.

Besides these methods of putting themselves in a posture of defence, which were of a positive nature, and might have subjected them to disagreeable discussions with France, there was one of a negative kind, which they might have employed with safety, as it could have afforded no reasonable occasion to take offence.

Your Excellency is, I conceive, at no loss to conjecture my meaning; which is no other than the facility, wherewith your constituents might have gratified the wishes of Great Britain, not by giving her any direct assistance, but by observing an exact and unfeigned neutrality.

This measure lay obviously before them, as one that would in a very essential degree prove satisfactory to Great Britain; they had reason to think, that more was not expected on her part, nor perhaps desired.

Why this measure was not embraced, may

now be accounted for by a multiplicity of reasons: the rejection of it was then, however, a proof, that your constituents were far from guided by the motives alledged in their justification, when they took such cold and disgusting notice of our solicitations for succours, according to treaty.

After the requisition on our part for the stipulated aid, and the refusal on theirs to grant it, the Dutch still continued to supply our enemy as they had done before; and still clamoured as loudly at the captures we made of their shipping concerned in this iniquitous business.

In the mean time, several of those individuals in Holland, who knew the value of its connexion with Great Britain, were incessantly representing the danger of injuring the latter, and of favouring the French; but they were not more successful than formerly, notwithstanding our difficulties were increasing, and the House of Bourbon was gathering and preparing her resources from every quarter of her immense domains.

Thus in public and in private, a sport was made of the sacredness of treaties; on their own interpretation of which, the French emissaries built with so much confidence, as to imagine that no reasoning could overturn it: while they, at the same time, who knew better,

ter, either from passiveness and pusillanimity of disposition or, what was much more criminal, from affectation of fear, durst not, or pretended not to dare arraign these factious and unjustifiable proceedings.

10 But, without insisting on the majesty of treaties—which indeed seems, by the present practice of mankind, to be little respected and less understood—might they not have appealed to the judgment and feelings of those people, who weigh their obligations to society in the balance of profit and loss?

Let us enter the warehouse of any of those merchants, who would think themselves aggrieved by a prohibition to freight their vessels for France, with the variety of materials necessary for the equipment of a fleet: ask him, in virtue of what authority he carries on a trade which he knows is highly prejudicial to Great Britain: he will answer, he is impowered to do it by treaties. But were he told, that in consequence of a serious examination of these treaties, impartial people were of opinion, a placart ought to be published, prohibiting the exportation of those articles to France, as was actually done in 1747, during the war before the last; were, at the same time, sufficient pains taken to convince him, which would be no difficult mat-

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ter, that the continuation of this trade would, in the issue, prove ruinous to his affairs; there is little doubt, he would listen to advice properly enforced, and desist from his undertakings.

It has been alledged, that the plurality of mercantile people were so unaccountably and so outrageously wedded to the interests of France, that all arts of persuasion would have proved ineffectual. It is much more probable, however, that had methods of this kind been pursued by persons of influence and authority, they would have produced, in the dispositions of the major part, a revolution in favour of Great Britain.

But no endeavours of this sort were used by any men of rank and power. The few who strove to disperse the cloud of prejudice were, on the contrary, discountenanced by those individuals, whose consequence might have encouraged and supported them; it became necessary, therefore, to act with great circumspection, in a cause, wherein they plainly saw, that, instead of being seconded by, they would infallibly render themselves obnoxious to their superiors, and incur, through their means, the odium of their fellow-citizens.

From this recapitulation, it appears, that not only the inclinations of the multitude were

were French, but that a general conspiracy prevailed in Holland against the true interests of the Republic, among the upper as well as the lower classes, owing to delusion, intrigue, and treachery.

All three were concerned in that violence, which assaulted the government with complaints, that the British cruizers paid no regard to the Dutch flag, and that the commerce of the United Provinces would be ruined, unless coercive measures were taken to repress their audaciousness; that the honour of the Dutch nation was interested in asserting the right of carrying naval stores to France; that it behoved therefore their High Mightinesses to proceed immediately to action, and to fit out squadrons, in order to oppose force with force.

Thus did a whole body of people, respectable in their numbers and property, but inflamed by misrepresentations, express a solemn desire to plunge themselves into the horrors of war, for the benefit of false friends.

Faction is a monster improvident of futurity, and blind to present danger: hurried by the precipitation that always characterises him, your Excellency's countrymen, however cool and dispassionate in their general disposition, are, when under his influence,

perhaps the most apt of any men to run into the opposite excesses.

In the present case, nothing but the warmth of faction could have inspired them with the indecent rancour that dictated their remonstrances to government.

But can one forbear, on this occasion, lamenting the deficiency of that resolution and firmness with which such ill-grounded remonstrances ought to have been treated?

What would have been more consistent with truth, with dignity, with the general interest, than to have told these angry complainants, that the state knew its just and lawful rights; that they who pressed the necessity of a quarrel with Great Britain, on account of the seizure of their vessels, were little acquainted with the necessary ties of amity subsisting between the English and the Dutch; that, to infringe them by downright acts of hostility, would be madness; that, if they consulted the safety and welfare of their country, they would acknowledge Great Britain had embraced a line of conduct, in the treatment of their ships and cargoes, which manifested the most honourable moderation, and conveyed the clearest proof of a sincere, unquestionable desire to give all possible satisfaction and contentment to the subjects of the

the United Provinces, without incurring essential prejudice to herself.

Such an answer would have quashed at once that querulous spirit of murmur and discord, which is now risen to such a height, as to fill all thinking minds with the most alarming apprehensions.

It would not, indeed, have suited the purpose of those who were labouring so assiduously to bring matters to extremities. They were conscious of the absurdity of the complaints, and felt the impropriety of the remonstrance; but it was their business to push a deluded people forward to such measures as would imperceptibly involve them in difficulties, which the complication of their different passions made them overlook, or not foresee.

How it came to pass, that so just and so reasonable a reply was not given, is a question that reaches above the class of ordinary subjects in the state: it is not, therefore, a question fit for a private individual to propound to your Excellency. It cannot, however, be dismissed in such respectful silence, as to prevent an Englishman from saying, *Incedo per ignes suppositos cineri doloso.*

Far be it from me to insinuate, that France could, at any price, have purchased instru-

ments of her designs in the rulers of your Excellency's country; but its annals in the last century furnish a strong proof, that, without intentional treason, even they who are principally concerned, by their rank and station, in the prosperity of a state, may, by their ill-management, whether through party-spirit or unskilfulness, betray its dearest interests into the hands of its most notorious enemies.

While the French were busied in carrying into execution the scheme of re-uniting, as they called it, the districts and dependencies of the towns and provinces ceded to them by the treaty of Nimeguen, the court of Madrid, however enfeebled by the debility of its monarch, Charles, the second of that name, and last of the Austrian line; whose mind and body were equally declining; had yet sense and spirit enough to adopt vigorous measures, and to declare war against France.

In this they were certainly justifiable, as France, without declaring war, was waging it very effectually in the Netherlands.

Spain had promised itself a potent ally in the Republic of Holland; having stood its useful friend in the invasion of that country by the French, in one thousand six hundred and seventy-two, and paid dear for that

manifestation of friendship, by the loss of many towns in Flanders, and the whole county of Burgundy.

It relied also on the treaties made with Holland for their mutual defence, and, more than all, upon the resentment of the Dutch for the haughtiness they daily experienced in their intercourse with France, and on the evident necessity of a strenuous and speedy opposition to the arms of its imperious and overbearing monarch.

Luxemburgh, the strongest town in the Spanish Low Countries, was invested, and shortly after taken, by the French. Other places of less note underwent the same fate: they were advanced into the heart of Flanders, and threatened Brussels itself.

In this conjuncture, the Prince of Orange, our William the Third, behaved, your Excellency must well recollect, with the same spirit that had preserved his country twelve years before: he laid before the States General the expediency of exerting themselves on this pressing occasion: he found unanimity in this opinion throughout the provinces, the deputies of Amsterdam alone excepted.

Through their power and influence, a party was formed in favour of France; of

which it espoused the cause with as much violence, as if it had been entirely composed of Frenchmen.

Neither indeed could it be stiled any other than a French faction: the ambassador of France was the head of it, and was known to conduct its operations.

This faction, heated by his machinations, acted a part which no Dutchman ought ever to forget; and which will remain in the memory of all politicians, a striking instance of the infatuation that may seize an otherwise judicious people, in matters that most nearly concern them, and wherein one would think it impossible they could be deceived.

In opposition to the request of the Stadtholder, in contradiction to the sentiments of the other deputies from the Seven Provinces, this party thwarted with the bitterest virulence all that had been concerted and agreed upon by their countrymen, as necessary to be done regarding France.

Spain, though in a manner at its last gasp, was totally abandoned; Germany, hardly recovered from the Turkish arms, was left open and defenceless; and France, in short, placed precisely on the footing she

had sought, of licentiousness and uncontroul in the oppression of its helpless neighbours.

All this your Excellency knows to be true. There is, however, another truth remaining to be told, which, of all others, should not be buried in oblivion, at a time when your Excellency's constituents ought to be reminded of the horrible excesses to which factions in Holland are capable of being led, by their treacherous or their infatuated guides.

As the defeat of the scheme projected by the patriotic party, was universally considered as the work of the French, which it certainly was, people could not contain their indignation at the triumph of their emissaries, and proceeded to threats of revenge upon them and their abettors, for this iniquitous betraying of their country, and base desertion of the common cause of Europe.

But these menaces produced an effect very different from that which was intended and expected. Instead of reflecting on the enormity of their behaviour, and of making the public some atonement, by coinciding with its wishes, they adhered with such pertinacity to the resolutions they had taken in favour of France, that they secretly

directly applied to the French ambassador for succours from his master, in order to compel their opponents, by force of arms, to relinquish the measures they had been framing against his ambitious designs.

Such were, your Excellency well remembers, the proceedings of that dangerous faction, raised by the contrivance, and acting under the auspices of the Count Davaux; that crafty agent of France for many years at the Hague; whose intrigues, whose artfulness, and whose insolence, afford materials for many a curious anecdote in the history of Holland.

Thus your Excellency must acknowledge, that, without any express and explicit determination to wrong their country, men will, when heated by partial views, and resolutely bent to carry a favourite point, sacrifice every object, without exception, to the accomplishment of that purpose.

The motive alledged in opposition to the Stadtholder's plan of acting against France, was the apprehension, that the whole expence would fall upon the States General; as the Emperor Leopold's coffers had been emptied in his long war with the Hungarians and the Turks, and his obstinacy would not permit him to make peace with either upon equitable terms; and as Spain was so exhausted, that
nothing

nothing but promises could be expected from her.

Such were the allegations used by the deputies of Amsterdam, in order to avert a war, the chief burden of which would fall upon their constituents.

These allegations were specious, but unfolid. The assistance afforded by Germany, and the diversion to the efforts of France, made by Spain, in the general war that followed, in one thousand six hundred and eighty-nine, shortly after the transaction just mentioned, shewed the motives alledged by the people of Amsterdam to have been groundless; and that the fear alone of interrupting their commerce, occasioned that violent fermentation, which broke out into acts amounting undeniably to absolute treason against the state.

In the same manner, the dread of losing any accession to their trade from the present troubles, now operates on the minds of the inhabitants of Amsterdam.

I hope your Excellency will do me the justice to believe, that I entertain no suspicion of the general good meaning and fidelity of that great and powerful city to the interest of the state. There are, however, in the multitude of its inhabitants, many venal tools and partisans of France; but what is chiefly to be lamented

mented is, not the mischief arising from their numbers, but the industry and zeal with which they propagate ideas and opinions contrary to the interest of Great Britain, and in their consequences ruinous to themselves.

These are not the men, over whom arguments, however clear and cogent, will have any effect: the only means of ascendancy over them, is by paying their price, or by terrifying them into their duty.

Leaving them, therefore, to triumph in the evils they have occasioned, till the day of proper retribution arrives, let us direct the operations of reason and reflection to those whom they have seduced, and whom we ought not to suppose, from perverseness and obstinacy, incurably deaf to all admonition.

To these let us hold up, for their imitation at this day, the example our ancestors set them, at the time of their calamities. It is an obligation, which in honour, in duty, in interest, they are bound to discharge, if they mean to acquit themselves, in the eyes of the world, like men of courage, integrity, and understanding.

Who were the people, in the infancy of the Dutch commonwealth, that first espoused its cause ostensibly and vigorously, at a time when the brave and respectable, though distressed

treft inhabitants of the Seven United Provinces were, by the affaffination of their illuftrious chief, William Prince of Orange, become destitute of as wife a head as ever prefided over the body of a nation, in its greateft difficulties?

In this critical fituation, England came openly and boldly to their affiftance. France had received a folemn application from the States, to take them into its protection: but the monarch, who then wore that crown, was not worthy of fo high a compliment: Henry the Third, the laft king of the houfe of Valois, was a prince every way unfit to affume the defence of a people, who were struggling for a religion, of which he perfecuted the profeflors, and to which he was a contemptible bigot. Neither could they promife themfelves more fafety for their liberties, when they recollected how treacheroufly his brother Francis, duke of Anjou, had endeavoured to raife himfelf to abfolute power, after he had accepted of the limited fovereignty of the Netherlands. They knew both thefe princes had been educated in a fchool of diffimulation and perfidy, the court of their mother Catherine of Medicis, a princefs whose character is perfectly known.

It

It was a happiness for Holland to have escaped a political connexion with France, of so intimate a nature as had been proposed.

England was reserved to become their protector in the day of need: its people, and its sovereign were such as their most ardent wishes could have formed, for the purpose of an alliance productive of all the assistance they wanted, and free from the perils attending ambition: the people were zealous Protestants, and friends to liberty; and the sovereign had too much wisdom, to be desirous, in her circumstances, of any dominions besides her own.

When your Excellency's ancestors applied to this kingdom for friendship and defence, they met another reception than they had found in France; the English were unanimous in their good wishes to your cause; and the only solicitude of Elizabeth was, what means and methods to employ, in order to support it most effectually.

Well do I know the enemies to Great Britain will say, that I need not make a parade of the readiness of England to assist Holland at that period; as she manifested thereby no more than a due sense of her own immediate interest: that had she done otherwise, she must

must have soon repented it, and felt the consequences of her imprudence.

No person will doubt the obvious propriety of embracing every occasion to reduce within bounds, a power become too formidable for the safety of its neighbours, especially, if they who possess it are ambitious and restless.

This being the character of Philip the Second of Spain, it was right in his neighbours to aim at a diminution of his greatness.

But a greater power had subsisted in the hands of his father Charles the Fifth; who, besides the dominions he left to his son, was in possession of the hereditary patrimony of the House of Austria, together with the Imperial crown and its whole influence, much more considerable then, than it is at present: and yet we do not find the European powers expressing any remarkable alarm on that account: France in conjunction with England, and sometimes alone, was fully able to check it.

It was not the power, so much as the character of Philip, that rendered him obnoxious to his neighbours; he was hated still more than he was feared. Motives of religion and humanity made him more enemies than political speculations would alone have done: these

these indeed came in aid; but had he not persecuted his Protestant subjects, he would, probably, have transmitted the whole of his paternal inheritance to his successors unimpaired, and as flourishing as he found it at his accession to the throne.

He lived at an æra when the minds of men were highly susceptible of religious motives in their undertakings. These motives brought so many auxiliaries from Germany to the relief of the Protestants in France, as often as they were persecuted by the bigotry of their kings. These motives recruited the armies of William Prince of Orange, and of his valiant brothers, when they first took up arms to resist the tyranny and massacres of the duke of Alva; and these motives had no small share in determining the people and government of England to effect the deliverance of the United Provinces, from the yoke of persecution and barbarity.

But had political causes alone interfered, they are sufficient, in the present case, to intitle the people of Great Britain to a reciprocation from those of Holland.

The gratitude of States to each other, ought always to be founded on political wisdom; and should never therefore endanger that which pays the debt.

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The proofs of amity, now required by this country, are such as flow from the rules of that equilibrium, which has long been the prevailing maxim in the united system of both states; and is now become more than ever their duty to maintain, if they preserve the least spark of that noble fire for their mutual prosperity, which rendered them so long equally the terror and the envy of their enemies.

I hope the preceding pages contain sufficient reasons, why it is become more necessary than ever, to strengthen the bonds of union between Great Britain and Holland.

I shall therefore conclude, by observing; that the Dutch are now called upon, to draw their swords in defence of the British nation, from the same considerations which led our forefathers into the field of battle, in conjunction with their own.

The motives that prompted the English to espouse their cause, were of the noblest nature.

If they acted from religion and humanity, it shewed they were men of conscience and honour; if it was policy, it proved them men of sense; if all those motives together, which was doubtless true, they amply deserved

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the character given them at that age, by the impartial world, of being a just, a brave, and intelligent people.

I fervently hope that your Excellency's countrymen will, in the present arduous crisis, form their conduct upon the combined plan of these laudable considerations.

In this expectation, which is the cordial desire of all honest men in Holland, as well as in Great Britain,

I am, with the most profound respect,

Sir,

Your Excellency's, &c.

THE

THE reader will readily perceive the preceding Letters to have been written before the rupture with Holland.

In the debates occasioned by that event, some great and respectable characters have not thought proper to insist on the invalidity of the Dutch claims to carry naval stores to the enemy, as being contrary to the letter, as well as to the spirit of treaties. They certainly stood in no need of this, amidst the many other arguments of far superior consequence, which they employed with so much weight and energy. But, as it is allowable to make the most of every argument that is susceptible of utility, it may not be amiss, by way of Appendix, to enquire whether the Dutch

are literally authorized by treaty, to supply the enemies of Great Britain with necessaries for the construction and equipment of their navies?

To this intent, the following pages, also written before the said rupture, are now, with all deference, submitted to the consideration of the public.

APPENDIX.

WHEN we revolve the pernicious consequences ensuing to Great Britain, from the large supplies of naval stores furnished to France by Holland, it is clear that a moderate degree of candour and integrity would have silenced every argument in favour of such proceedings on the part of the Dutch.

Common motives of justice and impartiality should have induced them to pay a due deference to the laws of neutrality, adopted by all nations; and even to have departed from the strict rigour of their right (on a supposition they possessed it) in favour of a people, with whom they acknowledged a friendly connexion.

Let those who profess to revere this right, argue ever so warmly in its defence, the most they can make of it, is no more than a privilege to avail themselves of circumstances, perhaps not described nor obviated with suf-

ficient accuracy and minuteness to prevent all cavil ; but which the Dutch can never turn to their account, without doing the most atrocious injury to the British nation.

To act in this manner, is to punish a whole state for the supposed want of penetration and vigilance in its rulers.

A precise and scrupulous regulation of all possible cases and emergencies, cannot be supposed to come within the compass of the most extensive negotiations, or the keenest foresight : the events which lie in the womb of futurity, not being discernible, the utmost required, is to provide against contingencies in general, without descending to an endless specification of particulars.

But what is this contingency not provided against, and in virtue of which non-provision the Dutch assume a right of acting the part of downright enemies ?

It is not in my power to conjecture, that any selection of words could frame an answer, which would not convey an idea of the most rancorous enmity in their proceedings.

What other answer could be made, than that the letter of a treaty, having granted a general permission to the Dutch, at all times to carry naval stores to the French ports, they from avarice, or from enmity, refuse the suspension

pension of such privilege, at a time when the exercising of it is become, in the consequences resulting from it, a commission of hostility against Great Britain?

Can this be called the behaviour of friends? Is it indeed any other than a proof either of malevolence, or of an insatiable thirst of gain, ready to sacrifice all motives of honour and honesty to this sole consideration?

Impartial people might think such an answer explanatory enough of the case in agitation.

But in a subject of this weighty nature, every argument that can help to elucidate it should be strictly, as well as dispassionately canvassed, and nothing omitted that is worthy of a regular investigation.

It is admitted by civilians, that to assist an enemy, in any shape or manner whatsoever, is to renounce alliance, friendship, neutrality, and whatever, in short, constitutes the spirit and essence of a good understanding.

It is also admitted, that nations at war have an unquestionable right to seize the property of their enemy, when it is done without violating the territorial sovereignty of a neutral power.

In consequence of these principles, neither

the Dutch, nor any other people, can have a right to carry such commodities to our enemies the French, as may prove instrumental in waging war.

Consequently, they can have no right to complain of the seizures made by the British cruizers, of their vessels employed in carrying naval stores to France, or in covering French property.

But if the Dutch are forbidden to aid our enemies in any wise, by the general rules of neutrality accepted throughout all nations, with what face can they claim such privilege, in virtue of treaties of friendship and alliance?

Is it consistent with common sense, that while nations professing a due regard for the laws of neutrality, have hitherto thought themselves bound to abstain from molesting or detrimmenting us, a nation leagued with us by every tie of amity, should deem itself entitled to treat us in the most injurious manner?

A claim of this sort is so repugnant to reason, that no treaties, however worded, can possibly support it.

The manifest intent and spirit of all treaties, is so clearly against such pretensions, that the warmest advocates of the measures adopted

adopted by the Dutch, have not dared to touch upon that argument.

The letter alone is what they have restricted themselves to alledge, in vindication of this iniquitous claim.

May I be permitted to follow them on their own ground, and to reconnoitre, if I may so express myself, those defences which they look upon as inexpugnable?

The fourth article of the treaty of December one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, is the mighty bulwark they oppose, with such invincible confidence, to all our complaints.

But let them recollect, that the purport and intent of a whole treaty must be consulted, in order to decide with certainty and precision on any single article in particular.

Let them also remember, that in order to fix and ascertain the sense and meaning of this, or of any treaty, the whole collection of treaties, subsisting between Great Britain and Holland, requires a consultation.

But above all, let them reflect, that they who claim the benefits resulting to them from treaties, should observe them on their part with inviolable fidelity; as a non-performance on one side, cancels all obligations on the other.

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The purpose and intention of the treaty of December, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, is that the English and the Dutch should behave to each other in the most friendly manner, and be mutually serviceable to the utmost, on every occasion.

If we consult the whole volume of treaties between Great Britain and Holland, we find them breathing every-where, throughout, the warmest attachment between both states.

How then will the Dutch reconcile this reciprocation of good offices, this testimony of cordiality, so apparent in the frame and texture of all these treaties, with the assistance which they so zealously insist on the right of bestowing upon the French, our natural and inveterate enemies?

Here, one cannot fail observing, we are in full possession of the obvious intent of treaties. They argue for us, in this respect, with a force truly irresistible, and which puts to shame all the base endeavours that are made, to substitute the letter in default of their spirit.

It is agreed, that in dubious cases, the decision shall rest upon their spirit alone, and exclusively.

If, on a supposition of ambiguity, we appeal

appeal to the spirit of treaties, independent of any other consideration, is it not in a much higher degree incumbent on us to abide solely by that motive, when the letter is involved in contradictions ?

We can view the letter of treaties in no other light than as words and expressions : but the spirit of treaties stands in a much more respectable point of view. It is the judge and expositor of those words and expressions.

When we therefore mention the spirit of treaties, what else can we mean than their letter unexplained, but containing a purport as fully implied as if it had been expressed ?

That the claim founded on the letter of the treaty of December, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, is contrary to common equity, no man can doubt ; but that it will appear contradictory, not only to the spirit of all treaties, but even to the letter of another treaty of equal weight, may not perhaps, upon due examination, prove altogether a surmise devoid of truth.

The treaty of December, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, is known to have been the superstructure of that which was concluded in February anteceding.

By

By this treaty of February, a termination was put to the second and last quarrel, into which the intrigues of France, during the reign of Lewis XIV. and our Charles II. had drawn Great Britain and Holland.

By that of December, the reconciliation between both people was perfected, and rendered a source of mutual advantages.

Both these treaties have always subsisted conjointly.

They were confirmed and renewed, in conjunction with many others, shortly after the commencement of the reign of his late Majesty King George the Second.

This was done by the British ministry at that time, by way of reminding Europe, that Great Britain and Holland remained upon the strictest footing of amity and alliance, and in order to preserve the general tranquillity, which the ambition of some powers had it in contemplation to disturb, had they been able to discover any symptom of disunion between those two states.

In one of the articles of the treaty of February, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, it is specified in the most expressive, remarkable terms, that neither party shall furnish supplies of any sort to the enemy

my of the other, that may be used for the purposes of war.

The words are so clear, and so apposite to the case in point of present litigation between Great Britain and Holland, that they cannot be misinterpreted.—They are as follow :

“ Neither of the parties shall give, nor
 “ consent that any of their subjects or inha-
 “ bitants shall give, any aid, favour, or
 “ counsel, directly or indirectly, by land or
 “ by sea, or on the fresh waters ; nor shall
 “ furnish, nor consent ~~that~~ the subjects and
 “ inhabitants of their dominions and coun-
 “ tries shall furnish, any ships, soldiers, ma-
 “ riners, provisions, money, instruments of
 “ war, gunpowder, or any other thing ne-
 “ cessary for making war, to the enemies of
 “ the other party.”

It is evident, from the whole tenour of this article, that the contracting parties considered it as the soul and life of the peace and amity they were framing, that no partiality, no assistance, no support of any kind or denomination, should be given to their respective enemies.

In this they reasoned according to the plainest dictates of common sense. What friendship, what trust can subsist between two parties,

parties, while they are at liberty to aid and abet their respective enemies with succours, or with advice ?

The Dutch, in particular, had strong precedents to plead, from their own records, in favour of the restrictions enjoined by this article.

Their ancestors, when engaged in hostilities with other states, had proceeded so far, as to prohibit all commercial intercourse with the enemy, to the subjects of neutral powers.

In one thousand five hundred and eighty-four, not long before the assassination of the great William, founder of the Republic, placarts were published, strictly forbidding all trading communication with the towns and provinces belonging to the enemy, and even with such places, under the dominion of their own allies, as were in the neighbourhood of the enemy. France and England yielded, upon this occasion, to the representations made to them by the States of Holland ; who obtained of Henry III. and of Queen Elizabeth, that their subjects should not supply the Spanish Netherlands with stores or provisions of any kind, while the Duke of Parma, who was then projecting the siege of Antwerp, carried on any military

military operations against the United Provinces.

In one thousand five hundred and eighty-six, edicts of the same tendency were issued during the government of the Earl of Leicester, sent over with men and money from England, to defend the Dutch, who had put themselves under the protection of Elizabeth.

In one thousand six hundred and thirty, the same prohibitions took place under the Stadtholdership of Henry, son to the forenamed William, and brother to Mauritius, whom he succeeded in that dignity. The States General had just taken the title of High and Mighty; and, encouraged by a long course of prosperity, were determined to avail themselves to the utmost of their good fortune, in the assertion and maintenance of what they deemed their just rights.

In one thousand six hundred and fifty-two, the United Provinces, lately become, by the death of William, the second Stadtholder of that name, a republic without chief agent or director, were embroiled in a most bloody quarrel with England, then also a commonwealth. They acted on this emergency, as they had done at the periods above mentioned, interdicting, in the most explicit and positive

terms, all trade with England, under the severest menaces of making prize of every vessel that should be found and proved in the act of sailing to any port in the three kingdoms. So severe was this interdiction, that, besides the seizure of ship and cargo, it threatened infractors with personal punishment.

These passages indisputably shew, that the article above quoted, in the treaty of February, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, was no more than a reciprocal authentication, and an avowed acknowledgment, respectively, of the propriety of those regulations.

That such were the united sentiments of both nations, appeared in the most conspicuous manner possible, at a period shortly following that of the revolution, in one thousand six hundred and eighty-nine, when Great Britain and Holland, joining in a declaration of war against France, prohibited any sort of commerce whatever with that kingdom, to all the rest of Europe, without exception, under the penalty of seizure and confiscation of every vessel, wherever found, laden with French property, or bound for any ports in France, with neutral cargoes, or even on a well-grounded suspicion of sailing towards them with an intent to trade.

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These injunctions were notified to all the neutral powers in Europe, and enforced with a high hand, during the whole course of the war.

It were needless to bring any further proof, in addition to the foregoing, that both English and Dutch were unanimously of opinion, that long-established customs and usages among nations, authorise them, when at war, to suffer no state, professing neutrality, to aid or abet, or be useful to the enemy, in any manner whatsoever.

No form of words can more strongly and pointedly, than those contained in the treaty of February, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, disapprove and condemn the conduct now pursued by the States General.

In this treaty one perceives as clear and specific an obviation of contingencies, as it is possible for human wisdom to provide.

It is natural to suppose, that they who presided at the treaty made in December following, could have no other intentions, than those who negotiated that of February preceding.

We are at the same time unquestionably entitled to affirm, that those who managed this latter, must have well known the contents of the former, which, we may not improperly

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presume, lay literally before them, while the subsequent was framing.

With their eye continually fixed on the forcible terms of the foregoing treaty, can we do otherwise than conclude, they were fully satisfied of its propriety? had they thought otherwise, would they not indubitably have declared their disapprobation, and the necessity of rescinding it?

Neither are we at liberty to imagine, they intended to repeal any part of this treaty of February: if they had, it was incumbent on them to do it in plain, unequivocal terms, especially that article above cited; of which, not only the spirit, but the very letter, is contradictory to the pretensions of Holland.

The foregoing positions being, it is presumed, undeniably true, and the facts equally well established, how can it be said the Dutch have an unanswerable plea for their conduct, in that article of the treaty of December, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, which allows the carrying of naval stores to the enemy? while we admit, on the one hand, the terms to be clear and decisive in their favour, can they refuse, on the other, to allow the terms of that article of the treaty made in February preceding, which is quoted in our behalf,

behalf, to be full as explicit and positive against them?

In this manifest opposition of the sense and wording of these two treaties, it may seem an advantage on the side of our antagonists, that they rely on the last concluded for a support of their claims.

But when a treaty, however prior to, and remote from the date of another, is therein commemorated and confirmed, its equivalence and incorporation with the treaty that renews it, needs no other specification.

Now this treaty of February, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, has been confirmed and renewed by a variety of treaties, concluded since that time, between Great Britain and Holland, and even so lately as the year one thousand seven hundred and thirty-two.

What will the partizans of the hostile system to Great Britain alledge, against authentic truths, and principles unfar-fetched, devoid of chicanery, apposite to the case in agitation, and, let me add, intirely consistent with the real, unquestionable interest of the Dutch?

Will they say, that a treaty, like a legislative act, is so sacred, that the direct and express terms, in which it is conceived, are to command the strictest and most punctual observance?

In answer to this position, the general truth of which may be safely admitted, let them take notice, that while subsequent treaties do not explicitly annul a former, it is reputed to subsist in its intire and unimpaired force.

Let them also recollect, what has just been observed, that when a treaty is renovated, it becomes a part of the treaty in agitation.

We are, consequently, to be governed, not by the direct and express terms of one single treaty, but by the terms comprehended in all the treaties, which are either positively renewed, or not formally repealed.

Finding, therefore, in a number of treaties, a clear and unequivocal confirmation of that made in February, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, whenever the treaty of December following is urged, in what is stiled its obvious and literal meaning, our answer is, That a proper and reasonable interpretation of it, must take in the sense and purport of all the remaining treaties in existence: that, consequently, the spirit of them all, and the letter itself of one, being contradictory to that treaty, it must, according to the rule of suffrages, yield to the majority.

When we review the combined efficacy of all these considerations, would it be thought presumptuous to question, whether we ought not,

not, in order to decide this matter effectually, to set aside the two contradictory articles, and to regulate ourselves according to the others.

This method seems the readiest, to get rid of the difficulty attending an altercation, where each of the disputants puts in a plea of equal force.

If what has been advanced to prove our right to plead the letter of treaties, is allowed to be just and valid, the Dutch cannot reasonably complain of being placed upon a worse footing than the English, by being obliged to give up that mode of justification.

But waving all dispute on this subject, and even granting the letter of treaties to be ever so powerfully on the side of the Dutch, still it will remain incontrovertibly true, that not only every argument deduced from the sense and spirit of treaties, but every allegation founded on the general ideas of rectitude and propriety, militate with much more weight and importance on the side of the English.

Armed with such authorities, they never can apprehend a defeat in the field of liberal discussion. Plain simple reasoning will supply them with sufficient powers to confound their antagonists; and, were I inclined to avail myself of religious considerations, I might on

this occasion remind these, with what energy we are told, that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Confiding therefore in the strength of those maxims, the truth of which is not disputed, I will take the liberty of proposing the following questions.

First, Can a claim be admitted, subversive of those principles of good sense on which the laws of nations are founded?

Secondly, Are contracts to be considered as absolutely and indispensably binding, at all times, and in all cases; and do they admit of no modification, according to seasons and circumstances?

Thirdly, Is it consistent with reason and justice, to suppose that any treaty can oblige men to submit to those inconveniences and hardships, to remove which is the very intent of all treaties?

Fourthly, Can it be the meaning of any one of sound understanding, to subscribe, without compulsion, an agreement, the issue of which he foresees will be ruinous to him.

Fifthly, Can the performance of absurdities be considered as the ground-work of negotiations?

When the advocates of the system, so highly
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favoured in Holland, shall have answered the above interrogations in the affirmative, then, but not till then, the English will stifle their resentment, and cease to complain of the Dutch, for a conduct, at which they cannot help, at present, expressing their utmost indignation.

But, till this affirmative appears, the people of this island must continue to be of opinion,

First, That the principles of common sense, founded on universal concurrence, and which, no chicanery can overturn, impower individuals, consequently nations, not only to resist force with force, but to consider every assistance given to the enemy, as an act of enmity.

Secondly, That treaties, no more than the laws of particular nations, are not absolute and unalterable in their nature; and that cases and times may arise, when a literal observance of them would become the height of absurdity:

Thirdly, That nations entering into agreements, for their mutual advantage, a compact that would aggrieve the one for the benefit of the other, exclusively, cannot be obligatory; it being, if intentional, a meer fraud, and, if unintended, a mutual deception.

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Fourthly,

Fourthly, That no man, nor body of men, with their eyes open, and at perfect freedom, will sign a contract for their own destruction; and cannot therefore be bound, by any set form of words, to the performance of deeds, that must necessarily lead to such an issue.

Fifthly, That the discovery of absurdity and contradiction in an agreement, cancels and renders it nugatory; and, instead of producing altercation, ought to prove a lesson to both parties, how easily human wisdom is intangled in its own devices.

These are maxims of an origin coeval with that of men: their immutability is not, like that of the laws of the Medes and Persians, established on human caprice; but on the unchangeable nature of things themselves, on the sense, knowledge, and experience of mankind, conveyed to the present generation through a succession of ages.

What has been advanced, will, it is hoped, appear a sufficient answer to the claims urged with such violence, on the part of the Dutch, and rested with so much confidence on the bare letter of a single treaty. This treaty, by arguments, which, it is presumed, are not unfair, is shewn to be contradicted by the letter of another, as it is obviously repugnant to

to the spirit of all, and manifestly contrary to the received notions of natural equity.

And now, after combating these equally unjust and fatal claims, let us ask with what degree of fidelity the States General have performed the various stipulations entered into with Great Britain, and renewed by several treaties?

In the contest between Great Britain and her colonies, in the ensuing hostilities with France, what part have the Dutch acted? have they discharged the duty of friends and allies, or have they observed a strict neutrality?

The reply to this question may be made without hesitation—They have done neither.

Holland, ever since the commencement of the present unhappy feuds, has been a store-house of military supplies for the Americans; and, since the rupture with France, is become the magazine from whence the French equip their navies.

In this the Dutch have not confined themselves to a mere passive permission to the enemies of this country, to fetch from Holland the means of annoying Great Britain.

They have gone much further; they have successively carried to France and to Spain,
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all the naval implements for which money could be found to pay them.

As to their treaties of amity and alliance with Great Britain, they have, in the strictest truth, considered them as waste paper. These treaties were, indeed, at the very breaking-out of hostilities, publicly mentioned in that light at Paris; and the Dutch have, since that time, by their behaviour, fully verified the prediction of the French.

To sum up their conduct in few words: — they have seen us threatened, not only by verbal denunciations of enmity, but by the most formidable preparations of war and invasion from every quarter: — they have seen us insulted upon our own coast, by the combined fleets of France and Spain: — they have, in consequence of difficulties and dangers unprecedented in our annals, been called upon for stipulated assistance: — in defiance of the most solemn and binding treaties, they have refused it.

In the mean time, they have continued to assist our enemies in a manner the most efficient and conducive to their purposes, and the most injurious to us: they declare their determination to persevere in so doing, and insist upon it as their lawful right. They have,

in short, throughout the whole of their transactions with the French, the Spaniards, and the Americans, exerted their most zealous endeavours to procure them safety and success, to the great and essential detriment of this country.

I shall not, I apprehend, be accused of having uttered a syllable of falsehood in this recapitulation of facts: they are notorious; they are the subject of general discussion; and the only question in the impartial world is, Whether they are not dishonourable and shameful in the highest degree?

When the body of a nation concurs in the denial of that proof of amity which is specified in the articles of a formal alliance—when, on the contrary, it testifies a partiality for the enemy of this ally—with what justice can it require from allies thus treated, a punctual performance of any treaty whatsoever, on their part?

Such conduct is not a bare infraction, but a total dissolution of all treaties of confederacy; and neutrality itself is inconsistent with any pretences of right, to carry on such correspondence and intercourse with the enemy of a state, as tend to forward his military operations against it.

We are therefore entitled to affirm, that,
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could one suppose the fourth article of the treaty of December, one thousand six hundred and seventy-four, authorised the carriage of naval stores to France by the subjects of Holland, the States General having refused to comply with the obligations they are under to Great Britain, by repeated treaties, the ties formed by any public contract between both nations are through such refusal dissolved, and the Dutch have no longer that sanction to plead for their enjoying such particular branches of commerce, with any of our enemies, as may enable these to distress us.

When we consider the repeated memorials presented by his Majesty's ambassador at the Hague, demanding the succours stipulated by treaty, and call to mind the contemptuous treatment which these memorials received, we cannot withhold our astonishment at a behaviour, which was certainly far more offensive than a bare denial.

The British ministry would have been fully warranted, if, on the first refusal of such a nature, it had taken the determination which was resolved upon last April, and declared the conduct of the Dutch subversive of the alliance between Great Britain and Holland, and placed them, in consequence, on the footing of a people to whom we were bound by no treaties.

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By deferring so long a method of proceeding so justifiable on their part, our ministry testified a patience and moderation, to which the States General had evidently no claim, when we recollect with what obstinacy they persisted in permitting their subjects to avail themselves of the letter of the treaty, made in December 1674, to set up a right of enabling France to injure Great Britain.

Having forfeited this right by treaty, on a supposition they could ever have had it, they cannot certainly claim it in virtue of the laws of neutrality: these, as already observed, declare against such pretensions in the most positive, explicit manner; and have, it is proved, at different times, been strictly enforced by the practice of the Dutch themselves. The only argument, of course, remaining to them is, that of force and violence.

Whether the critical situation of Great Britain, at this hour, may encourage them to employ hostile measures against her, is a matter of speculation not easily determined. Present profit is an allurements of such efficacy, that it requires much resolution to withstand, even in those who consider it as the source of future detriment.

It may, however, be presumed, an enlightened

lightened people, keen in the discernment of their real interest, will not be so far deluded, as to sacrifice a futurity of welfare, that may last for ages, to temporary benefits, which they are conscious must be purchased at the expence of that security from foreign influence and controul, which is the basis of commercial prosperity; but which they will not long retain, if those powers, now at war with Great Britain, should ever acquire a decided superiority at sea, and gain thereby possession of the means to fulfil those other objects it is well known they have in view.



F I N I S.

